

proving to be a crashing failure. This war is in its 10th year, and we still haven't vanquished the Taliban. We still haven't brought a stable democracy to Afghanistan. And we still haven't trained the Afghans to take responsibility for their own security.

The Republicans want to cut wasteful, ineffective government programs. Well, if that is true, I suggest the majority start with Afghanistan before going after American seniors, school-children, and working people. My Republican colleagues believe in limited government as long as the things they're limiting are taxes paid by special interests and investments in people who need a helping hand. When it comes to foreign invasions and decade-long military occupations, Republicans are the biggest spenders of all.

With these priorities, not only have they lost their moral compass, they've lost the American people as well. Recent polling shows that overwhelming majorities want to see spending on Medicare, Medicaid, and education increased or stay the same. By contrast, nearly two-thirds of Americans are fed up with the war in Afghanistan and don't think it's worth fighting.

It's impossible, Madam Speaker, to take seriously any budget proposal that doesn't even mention Afghanistan or Iraq and doesn't cut billions and billions in wasteful war spending from the budget.

It's time to bring our troops home. It's the right thing to do. It's what the people want. It's a sensible, humane, and compassionate path to fiscal responsibility.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, earlier this year, an irresponsible bigot burned a Koran in Florida. That was a despicable act. But unfortunately, a number of far worse acts eventuated; that is, the murder, calculated and deliberate murder, of a number of innocent people in Afghanistan by people purporting to be defending their religion against the burning of a book in Florida by massacring innocent civilians in Afghanistan.

And I am pleased that people, including General Petraeus and others, condemned the irresponsibility of the Koran burning, but there needs to be even greater condemnation of the notion that that in any way justifies murder. That includes a kind of condemnation, in my judgment, of the President of Afghanistan, our increasingly unimpressive ally Mr. Karzai, who, I believe, added to the furor there by insisting that the man who burned the Koran should have been prosecuted. Well, under American law, he was not

prosecuted. He should not have been. The right to do obnoxious things is a very important part of the First Amendment.

But what is most appalling is that people purported, in the name of religion, then not even to do anything against that individual, and that would have been unjustified. I am not suggesting that there is any justification for any violence against him. But violence against people in Afghanistan, employees of the United Nations there for humanitarian reasons, other citizens of Western countries, for them to have been assaulted and murdered by people purporting to be acting in the name of religion, that is the true outrage.

And I hope people will resist any temptation even to equate the two. An act of stupid and offensive bigotry against a book should be criticized. Murder of innocent people in the name of a religion—and it's particularly ironic that people who committed these murders claim to be vindicating their religion. Indeed, no denigration of a religion could be greater than to murder innocent people in its name. If I were to be asked what did I think more detracted from the image of Islam, this irresponsible publicity seeker in Florida burning a Koran or people in the name of the religion murdering innocent people including those who went to Afghanistan only to help, it is clearly the latter.

So, Madam Speaker, let's be very clear that nothing in what happened with the burning of a Koran comes close to justifying the outrageous, murderous behavior of people in Afghanistan. And I am pleased that there is attention given to this, but the condemnation should be of this kind of attack on innocent citizens, and we ought to keep this in some perspective.

CONGRESSMAN PAUL RYAN'S BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CHU. Yesterday, Congressman PAUL RYAN introduced the Republican Party's fiscal year 2012 road-to-ruin budget.

We have been back to work in the House for 14 weeks. And for 14 straight weeks, the Republican majority has done nothing to create jobs. They haven't even put a single jobs bill on the House floor. In fact, their proposed spending bill for 2011 actually costs America 700,000 jobs.

Now, Congressman RYAN and the Republican leadership want to extend their job-killing policies and permanently eliminate the middle class. The Republicans' road to ruin is nothing short of an attack on working families, seniors, students, and children.

It attacks America's seniors by ending the Medicare guarantee and put-

ting your fate in the hands of private insurance companies. It attacks America's workers by not doing anything to create jobs and by gutting job training. It attacks America's students by cutting education and raising college costs for nearly 10 million students.

Now, no matter what side of the aisle we are on, we can all agree that deficit reduction is important. But the question is how do we do it. What we can't do is balance the budget on the backs of America's middle class, our seniors, our students, and our children.

But I do know some things we can't afford. At a time when middle class families can't pay their bills, we can't afford to keep spending billions in subsidies for Big Oil and giveaways for special interests. At a time when our senior population is growing, we can't afford to slash funding for nursing homes and put health insurance companies back in control of health care. At a time when our economy needs an infusion of the best and brightest workers, we can't afford to cut public education while protecting tax breaks for companies who ship jobs overseas and spending billions of dollars in tax breaks on people already making upward of half a million dollars.

A budget isn't just about dollars and cents; it's about priorities and values. And as representatives of the American people, our priorities and values should reflect their values: Jobs, a secure retirement, the promise of educational opportunity, and the certainty that if your child is sick then you will be able to afford to see the doctor.

If you vote for this bill, then who amongst us could go home and look senior citizens in the eye knowing we ended Medicare as we know it? Who could look an unemployed worker in the eye knowing we didn't do anything to create jobs? Who could look a student in the eye knowing we took away their opportunity to succeed with a quality education?

I want to reduce our deficit. I know it's vital for our fiscal future. But I also want to look my constituents in the eye and tell them I stood up for their priorities and not those of Big Oil, international corporations, and special interests.

The truth is we can do both. We can get our deficit under control. And we can do it without cuts that hurt hard-working families.

□ 1040

CONGRESSMAN PAUL RYAN'S PRIVATIZED FISCAL FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Yesterday, PAUL RYAN of Wisconsin, Republican chair of the Budget Committee, revealed his projected future for seniors in America